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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/63/414/Add.2)*]

63/214. Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles and commitments enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] the principles embodied in the Declaration of Barbados,[2] the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[4] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[5] as well as other relevant declarations and international instruments,

Recalling the Declaration and review document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second special session,[6]

Taking into account all other relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 54/225 of 22 December 1999, 55/203 of 20 December 2000, 57/261 of 20 December 2002, 59/230 of 22 December 2004 and 61/197 of 20 December 2006,

Taking into account also the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,[7]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] See resolution S-22/2, annex.

[7] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[8]

Recalling also the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, signed at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 March 1983,[9] and the protocols thereto, which contain the definition of the wider Caribbean region of which the Caribbean Sea is part,

Reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[10] which provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

Emphasizing the importance of national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector as recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[11]

Recalling the relevant work done by the International Maritime Organization,

Considering that the Caribbean Sea area includes a large number of States, countries and territories, most of which are developing countries and small island developing States that are ecologically fragile and socially and economically vulnerable and are also affected, inter alia, by their limited capacity, narrow resource base, need for financial resources, high levels of poverty and the resulting social problems and the challenges and opportunities of globalization and trade liberalization,

Recognizing that the Caribbean Sea has unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystems,

Recognizing also that the Caribbean has been shown to be the most tourism-dependent region in the world relative to its size,

Noting that the Caribbean Sea, when compared to all other large marine ecosystems, is surrounded by the largest number of countries in the world,

Emphasizing that the Caribbean countries have a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and associated phenomena, such as the rise in sea level, the El Niño phenomenon and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by hurricanes, floods and droughts, and that they are also subject to natural disasters, such as those caused by volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes,

Bearing in mind the heavy reliance of most of the Caribbean economies on their coastal areas, as well as on the marine environment in general, to achieve their sustainable development needs and goals,

Acknowledging that the intensive use of the Caribbean Sea for maritime transport, as well as the considerable number and interlocking character of the maritime areas under national jurisdiction where Caribbean countries exercise their

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[8] See resolution 60/1.

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1506, No. 25974.

[10] Ibid., vol. 1833, No. 31363.

[11] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

rights and duties under international law, present a challenge for the effective management of the resources,

Noting the problem of marine pollution caused, inter alia, by land-based sources and the continuing threat of pollution from ship-generated waste and sewage, as well as from the accidental release of hazardous and noxious substances in the Caribbean Sea area,

Taking note of the relevant resolutions of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on safety of transport of radioactive materials,

Mindful of the diversity and dynamic interaction and competition among socio-economic activities for the use of the coastal areas and the marine environment and their resources,

Mindful also of the efforts of the Caribbean countries to address in a more holistic manner the sectoral issues relating to the management of the wider Caribbean Sea region and, in so doing, to promote integrated management of the wider Caribbean Sea region in the context of sustainable development, through a regional cooperative effort among Caribbean countries,

Welcoming the continued efforts of the States members of the Association of Caribbean States to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, and recognizing in this regard the firm commitment by Heads of State and Government of the Association to take the steps necessary to ensure the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to relevant international law,

Taking note of the creation by the Association of Caribbean States of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and welcoming its ongoing work,

Cognizant of the importance of the Caribbean Sea to present and future generations and to the heritage and the continuing economic well-being and sustenance of people living in the area, and the urgent need for the countries of the region to take appropriate steps for its preservation and protection, with the support of the international community,

1. *Recognizes* that the Caribbean Sea is an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including, inter alia, the consideration of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law;

2. *Takes note* of the efforts of the Caribbean States and the work undertaken by the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States, including, inter alia, the development of their concept of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, and invites the international community to support such efforts;

3. *Welcomes* the plan of action adopted by the Caribbean Sea Commission, including its scientific and technical components and governance and outreach components, and invites the international community and the United Nations system to support, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to implement the plan of action;

4. *Recognizes* the efforts of Caribbean countries to create conditions leading to sustainable development aimed at combating poverty and inequality, and in this regard notes with interest the initiatives of the Association of Caribbean States in the focal areas of sustainable tourism, trade, transport and natural disasters;

5. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and from illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards, as well as pollution from land-based activities;

6. *Invites* the Association of Caribbean States to submit a report to the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, for consideration during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly;

7. *Calls upon* all States to become contracting parties to relevant international agreements to enhance maritime safety and promote the protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean Sea from pollution, damage and degradation from ships and ship-generated waste;

8. *Supports* the efforts of Caribbean countries to implement sustainable fisheries management programmes and to meet the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;[12]

9. *Calls upon* States, taking into consideration the Convention on Biological Diversity,[13] to develop national, regional and international programmes to halt the loss of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean Sea, in particular fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves;

10. *Invites* Member States and intergovernmental organizations within the United Nations system to continue their efforts to assist Caribbean countries in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols concerning the management, protection and sustainable utilization of Caribbean Sea resources and in implementing them effectively;

11. *Calls upon* the international community, the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, and invites the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to support actively the national and regional activities of the Caribbean States towards the promotion of the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources;

12. *Expresses deep concern* about the severe destruction and devastation caused to several countries by heightened hurricane activity in the wider Caribbean region in recent years;

13. *Urges* the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide aid and assistance to the countries of the Caribbean region in the implementation of their long-term programmes of disaster prevention, preparedness,

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[12] *International Fisheries Instruments with Index* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.V.11), sect. III

[13] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

mitigation, management, relief and recovery, based on their development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction into a comprehensive approach to sustainable development;

14. *Acknowledges* the pivotal role of the Association of Caribbean States in regional dialogue and in the consolidation of a wider Caribbean cooperation zone in the field of disaster risk reduction, as well as the importance of the international community in deepening existing cooperation and consolidating new initiatives with that regional mechanism within the context of the outcomes of the High-level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Saint-Marc, Haiti, from 14 to 16 November 2007, and the plan of action approved by the Ministerial Council of the Association upon the recommendation of the Conference;

15. *Invites* Member States, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to consider training programmes for the development of a human resource capacity at different levels and to developing research aimed at enhancing the food security of Caribbean countries, as well as the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources;

16. *Calls upon* Member States to improve as a matter of priority their emergency response capabilities and the containment of environmental damage, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, in the event of natural disasters or of an accident or incident relating to maritime navigation;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-fifth session, under the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" of the item entitled "Sustainable development", on the implementation of the present resolution, including a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations.

72nd plenary meeting
19 December 2008